

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
EUR-12 ARA-10 (ISO) W
-----035689 241029Z /11

R 230716Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5434
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SANA 3581

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJ: MORE APPOINTMENTS IN YAR

1. APPOINTMENTS ON 19 JULY OF ALI SHAYBA AS CHIEF OF STAFF AND ABD AL-AZIZ AL-BARADI AS DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF WERE PREDICTED BY SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE, SALIH HUDAYAN, AND SPECIAL SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE, ALI MUSALLIM, ON 18 JULY.

2. APPOINTMENT OF ABD AL-AZIZ HUSSAIN AL-GHASHMI, 28 YEAR OLD YOUNGER BROTHER OF SLAIN PRESIDENT, AS COMMANDER OF NEW UNIT CALLED REPUBLICAN GUARD IS MORE INTERESTING. ONE OF UNSTATED BUT IMPORTANT REASONS FOR DESIRE OF HASHID SHAYKH ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN AL-AHMAR FOR BRINGING OTHER SHAYKHS -- ESPECIALLY MOUJAHID -- INTO ARMY WAS TO DILUTE POWER OF HAMDAN TRIBE, A CONSTITUENT ELEMENT OF HASHID. TO REMAIN STRONG, OF COURSE, HAMDAN SHAYKH MUHAMMAD AL-GHASHMI SOUGHT FROM DAY OF ASSASSINATION TO KEEP CONTROL OF SOME OF NEW EQUIPMENT -- TANKS AND ROCKETS -- WHICH RECENTLY IMPORTED INTO COUNTRY TO FORM NUCLEUS OF NEW TRIBAL UNIT IN GHASHMI HOMETOWN JUST TO NORTHWEST OF SANA. EMBASSY DOES NOT KNOW ABD AL-AZIZ HUSSAYN AL-GHASHMI,
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BUT HE CAN PROBABLY BE COUNTED AS STRONG SUPPORTER OF ALI ABDALLAH SALIH. IT AMOUNTS TO HAMDAN-SANHAN ALLIANCE AGAINST REST OF HASHID, JUST AS IN HAMDI DAYS. RELATIONSHIP IS PERSONAL AS WELL AS POLITICAL. SALIH AND FORMER PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI OWNED ADJOINING HOUSES IN SANA AND SALIH IS INTIMATE OF ALL FAMILY MEMBERS.

3. APPOINTMENT ON THURSDAY, 20 JULY, OF ABDAL KARIM AL-ARASHI AS VICE PRESIDENT WAS ALSO PREDICTED BY SAUDIS. IT IS REAL KICK UPSTAIRS SINCE WITH APPOINTMENT OF LT.COL. LUFT AL-KILABI TO OFFICE OF PRESIDENCY, ARASHI HAS BEEN SHORN OF HIS BUREAUCRATIC BASE OF POWER WHICH CONTROLLED FLOW OF PEOPLE AND PAPERS TO PRESIDENT. LUFT AL-KILABI WAS RECENTLY NAMED SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE LIAISON FOR ALI ABDALLAH SALIH. HE IS PROFESSIONAL AND FAIRLY COMPETENT SECURITY OFFICER WHO WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO EMBASSY OVER PAST DECADE. HE IS FORMER LEADER GRANTEE.

4. ACCORDING TO IBRAHIM AL-KIBSI, TWO KEY AND VERY TROUBLESOME ADVISORS OF ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN ARE BEING REMOVED FROM COUNTRY. MUJAHID ABU SHAWARIB IS GOING ABROAD FOR A "CURE" WITH PROMISE OF ANY EMBASSY HE MIGHT LIKE. ABDAL MALIK TAYIB HAS AGREED OPEN YAR EMBASSY IN MOROCCO. KIBSI SAYS -- AND OTHERS HERE AGREE -- THAT SEVERANCE OF LINK BETWEEN THESE TWO MEN AND ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN OPENS WAY FOR LATTER TO BECOME SPEAKER OF EXPANDED PEOPLE'S CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. NOT CLEAR IF ARASHI STILL HOLDS THIS POSITION OR NOT NOW THAT HE IS VICE PRESIDENT BUT HE PRESIDED OVER ASSEMBLY WHEN IT ELECTED SALIH.

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5. ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI, AGAIN AS PREDICTED BY SAUDIS, CONTINUED AT HIS POST WITH NO RPT NO CHANGES OF MINISTER. HIS GOVERNMENT IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE LONG-LIVED ACCORDING TO MEN LIKE AHMED ABDO SAID AND IBRAHIM AL-KIBSI, BUT IT WILL ASSERT IMPORTANT ISSUE OF CONTINUITY IN DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL BALANCE BETWEEN NORTHERNERS AND SOUTHERNERS IN YAR.

COMMENT: CONSOLIDATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT OF ALI ABDALLAH SALIH IS PROCEEDING WELL WITH MANY IN SANA EXPRESSING RELIEF AND CONFIDENCE THAT STRONG MAN HAS EMERGED IN YEMEN'S HOUR OF NEED. OTHERS HERE ARE SHAKING THEIR HEADS IN WONDER AND SOME UNEASE AT EXTRAORDINARY FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL PRESSURES WHICH SAUDIS HAVE BROUGHT TO BEAR SO SUCCESSFULLY IN YAR. GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF YEMENI SOCIETY AND COMPLICATED POLITICAL PAST, WE EXPECT TO SEE MUCH POLITICAL MANEUVERING MATERIALIZE OVER NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS BUT IN MEANTIME, GOVERNMENT IS IN PLACE TO INITIATE IN FORCEFUL WAYS NEW POLICY OF OPPOSITION TO SOUTH YEMEN, SOVIETS, AND CUBANS AND CLOSER DEALINGS WITH SAUDIS AND US.

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, MINISTERS (DIPLOMATS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANA03581
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780303-0074
Format: TEL
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780729/aaaaaymx.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9445f96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1912935
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORE APPOINTMENTS IN YAR
TAGS: PINT, YE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9445f96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014